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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

34 CFR Chapter III

[CFDA Number: 84.133B-9]

Final Priority; National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research--Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers

AGENCY: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Department of Education.

ACTION: Final priority.

SUMMARY: The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services announces a priority for the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program administered by the National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR).

Specifically, we announce a priority for a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Community Living and Participation for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities. The Assistant Secretary may use this priority for competitions in fiscal year (FY) 2013 and later years. We take this action to focus research attention on areas of national need. We intend this priority to improve outcomes among individuals with disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE: This priority is effective [INSERT DATE 30 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Marlene Spencer, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., room 5133, Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2700. Telephone: (202) 245-7532 or by email: marlene.spencer@ed.gov.

If you use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) or a text telephone (TTY), call the Federal Relay Service (FRS), toll free, at 1-800-877-8339.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of Program: The purpose of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program is to plan and conduct research, demonstration projects, training, and related activities, including international activities, to develop methods, procedures, and rehabilitation technology that maximize the full inclusion and integration into society, employment, independent living, family support, and economic and social self-sufficiency of individuals with disabilities, especially individuals with the most severe disabilities, and to improve the effectiveness of services authorized under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Rehabilitation Act).

## Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers

The purpose of the RRTCs, which are funded through the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program, is to achieve the goals of the Rehabilitation Act through advanced research, training, technical assistance, and dissemination activities in general problem areas, as specified by NIDRR. These activities are designed to benefit rehabilitation service providers, individuals with disabilities, and the family members or other authorized representatives of individuals with disabilities.

Additional information on the RRTC program can be found at: [www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program.html#RRTC](http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/res-program.html#RRTC).

Program Authority: 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(b)(2).

Applicable Program Regulations: 34 CFR part 350.

We published a notice of proposed priority in the Federal Register on February 28, 2013 (78 FR 13597). That notice contained background information and our reasons for proposing the particular priority.

There are differences between the notice of proposed priority and this notice of final priority as discussed under Analysis of Comments and Changes.

Public Comment: In response to our invitation in the notice of proposed priority, two parties submitted comments on the proposed priority. One of these commenters wrote in

support of the priority, and one had a specific comment and recommendation.

Generally, we do not address technical and other minor changes or suggested changes the law does not authorize us to make under the applicable statutory authority. In addition, we do not address general comments that raised concerns not directly related to the proposed priority.

Analysis of Comments and Changes: An analysis of the comments and of any changes in the priority since publication of the proposed priority follows.

Comment: One commenter recommended that NIDRR require the RRTC to include individuals with disabilities in its target audience as it disseminates educational materials and research findings under paragraph (c)(iii) of the priority.

Discussion: NIDRR agrees that the RRTC must provide information to individuals with disabilities as part of its mission to serve as a national resource center on community living and participation for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Paragraph (c)(i) of the priority requires the RRTC to provide information and technical assistance to individuals with psychiatric disabilities and their representatives. Paragraph (c)(iv) requires the RRTC to involve key stakeholders in the conduct of its research

activities in order to maximize the relevance and usability of the findings.

Changes: To emphasize the importance of including individuals with psychiatric disabilities in the activities of this RRTC, we added "key stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities" as a requirement of dissemination specified in paragraph (c)(iii) and we clarified that the term "key stakeholders" in paragraph (c)(iv) includes individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

FINAL PRIORITY:

Background:

This final priority is in concert with NIDRR's Long-Range Plan for Fiscal Years 2013-2017 (Plan). The Plan, which was published in the Federal Register on April 4, 2013 (78 FR 20299), can be accessed on the Internet at the following site:

[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/policy.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/nidrr/policy.html).

Through the implementation of the Plan, NIDRR seeks to improve the health and functioning, employment, and community living and participation of individuals with disabilities through comprehensive programs of research, engineering, training, technical assistance, and knowledge translation and dissemination. The Plan reflects NIDRR's commitment to quality, relevance, and balance of its

programs to ensure appropriate attention to all aspects of well-being of individuals with disabilities and to all types and degrees of disability.

This priority reflects a major area or domain of NIDRR's research agenda (community living and participation), combined with a specific broad disability population (psychiatric disability).

Definitions:

The research that is proposed under this priority must be focused on one or more stages of research. If the RRTC is to conduct research that can be categorized under more than one research stage, or research that progresses from one stage to another, those research stages must be clearly specified. For the purposes of this priority, the stages of research, which we published for comment on January 25, 2013 (78 FR 5330), are:

(i) Exploration and Discovery means the stage of research that generates hypotheses or theories by conducting new and refined analyses of data, producing observational findings, and creating other sources of research-based information. This research stage may include identifying or describing the barriers to and facilitators of improved outcomes of individuals with disabilities, as well as identifying or describing existing

practices, programs, or policies that are associated with important aspects of the lives of individuals with disabilities. Results achieved under this stage of research may inform the development of interventions or lead to evaluations of interventions or policies. The results of the exploration and discovery stage of research may also be used to inform decisions or priorities.

(ii) Intervention Development means the stage of research that focuses on generating and testing interventions that have the potential to improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Intervention development involves determining the active components of possible interventions, developing measures that would be required to illustrate outcomes, specifying target populations, conducting field tests, and assessing the feasibility of conducting a well-designed intervention study. Results from this stage of research may be used to inform the design of a study to test the efficacy of an intervention.

(iii) Intervention Efficacy means the stage of research during which a project evaluates and tests whether an intervention is feasible, practical, and has the potential to yield positive outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Efficacy research may assess the strength of

the relationships between an intervention and outcomes, and may identify factors or individual characteristics that affect the relationship between the intervention and outcomes. Efficacy research can inform decisions about whether there is sufficient evidence to support “scaling-up” an intervention to other sites and contexts. This stage of research can include assessing the training needed for wide-scale implementation of the intervention, and approaches to evaluation of the intervention in real world applications.

(iv) Scale-Up Evaluation means the stage of research during which a project analyzes whether an intervention is effective in producing improved outcomes for individuals with disabilities when implemented in a real-world setting. During this stage of research, a project tests the outcomes of an evidence-based intervention in different settings. The project examines the challenges to successful replication of the intervention, and the circumstances and activities that contribute to successful adoption of the intervention in real-world settings. This stage of research may also include well-designed studies of an intervention that has been widely adopted in practice, but that lacks a sufficient evidence-base to demonstrate its effectiveness.



Priority--RRTC on Community Living and Participation for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities.

The Assistant Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services establishes a priority for an RRTC on Community Living and Participation for Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities.

The RRTC must contribute to improving the community living and participation outcomes of individuals with psychiatric disabilities by:

(a) Conducting research activities in one or more of the following priority areas, focusing on individuals with psychiatric disabilities as a group or on individuals in specific disability or demographic subpopulations of individuals with psychiatric disabilities:

(i) Technology to improve community living and participation outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

(ii) Individual and environmental factors associated with improved community living and participation outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

(iii) Interventions that contribute to improved community living and participation outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities. Interventions include any strategy, practice, program, policy, or tool that, when

implemented as intended, contributes to improvements in outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

(iv) Effects of government practices, policies, and programs on community living and participation outcomes for individuals with psychiatric disabilities.

(v) Practices and policies that contribute to improved community living and participation outcomes for transition-aged youth with psychiatric disabilities;

(b) Focusing research on one or more specific stages of research. If the RRTC plans to conduct research that can be categorized under more than one of the research stages, or research that progresses from one stage to another, those stages must be clearly specified. These stages and their definitions are provided at the beginning of the Final Priority section in this notice; and

(c) Serving as a national resource center related to community living and participation for individuals with psychiatric disabilities, their families, service and support providers, and other stakeholders by conducting knowledge translation activities that include, but are not limited to:

(i) Providing information and technical assistance to service providers, individuals with psychiatric

disabilities and their representatives, and other key stakeholders;

(ii) Providing training, including graduate, pre-service, and in-service training, to rehabilitation service providers and other disability service providers, to facilitate more effective delivery of services to individuals with psychiatric disabilities. This training may be provided through conferences, workshops, public education programs, in-service training programs, and similar activities;

(iii) Disseminating research-based information and materials related to community living and participation for individuals with psychiatric disabilities to key stakeholders, including individuals with psychiatric disabilities; and

(iv) Involving key stakeholder groups, including individuals with psychiatric disabilities, in the activities conducted under paragraph (a) in order to maximize the relevance and usability of the new knowledge generated by the RRTC.

#### Types of Priorities:

When inviting applications for a competition using one or more priorities, we designate the type of each priority as absolute, competitive preference, or invitational

through a notice in the Federal Register. The effect of each type of priority follows:

Absolute priority: Under an absolute priority, we consider only applications that meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(3)).

Competitive preference priority: Under a competitive preference priority, we give competitive preference to an application by (1) awarding additional points, depending on the extent to which the application meets the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(i)); or (2) selecting an application that meets the priority over an application of comparable merit that does not meet the priority (34 CFR 75.105(c)(2)(ii)).

Invitational priority: Under an invitational priority, we are particularly interested in applications that meet the priority. However, we do not give an application that meets the priority a preference over other applications (34 CFR 75.105(c)(1)).

This notice does not preclude us from proposing additional priorities, requirements, definitions, or selection criteria, subject to meeting applicable rulemaking requirements.

Note: This notice does not solicit applications. In any year in which we choose to use this priority, we invite applications through a notice in the Federal Register.

## Executive Orders 12866 and 13563

### Regulatory Impact Analysis

Under Executive Order 12866, the Secretary must determine whether this regulatory action is "significant" and, therefore, subject to the requirements of the Executive order and subject to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). Section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866 defines a "significant regulatory action" as an action likely to result in a rule that may--

(1) Have an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more, or adversely affect a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local or tribal governments or communities in a material way (also referred to as an "economically significant" rule);

(2) Create serious inconsistency or otherwise interfere with an action taken or planned by another agency;

(3) Materially alter the budgetary impacts of entitlement grants, user fees, or loan programs or the rights and obligations of recipients thereof; or

(4) Raise novel legal or policy issues arising out of legal mandates, the President's priorities, or the principles stated in the Executive order.

This final regulatory action is not a significant regulatory action subject to review by OMB under section 3(f) of Executive Order 12866.

We have also reviewed this final regulatory action under Executive Order 13563, which supplements and explicitly reaffirms the principles, structures, and definitions governing regulatory review established in Executive Order 12866. To the extent permitted by law, Executive Order 13563 requires that an agency--

(1) Propose or adopt regulations only upon a reasoned determination that their benefits justify their costs (recognizing that some benefits and costs are difficult to quantify);

(2) Tailor its regulations to impose the least burden on society, consistent with obtaining regulatory objectives and taking into account--among other things and to the extent practicable--the costs of cumulative regulations;

(3) In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, select those approaches that maximize net benefits (including potential economic, environmental, public health and safety, and other advantages; distributive impacts; and equity);

(4) To the extent feasible, specify performance objectives, rather than the behavior or manner of compliance a regulated entity must adopt; and

(5) Identify and assess available alternatives to direct regulation, including economic incentives--such as user fees or marketable permits--to encourage the desired behavior, or provide information that enables the public to make choices.

Executive Order 13563 also requires an agency "to use the best available techniques to quantify anticipated present and future benefits and costs as accurately as possible." The Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs of OMB has emphasized that these techniques may include "identifying changing future compliance costs that might result from technological innovation or anticipated behavioral changes."

We are issuing this final priority only on a reasoned determination that its benefits justify its costs. In choosing among alternative regulatory approaches, we selected those approaches that maximize net benefits. Based on the analysis that follows, the Department believes that this regulatory action is consistent with the principles in Executive Order 13563.

We also have determined that this regulatory action does not unduly interfere with State, local, and tribal governments in the exercise of their governmental functions.

In accordance with both Executive orders, the Department has assessed the potential costs and benefits, both quantitative and qualitative, of this regulatory action. The potential costs are those resulting from statutory requirements and those we have determined as necessary for administering the Department's programs and activities.

The benefits of the Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program have been well established over the years, as projects similar to the one envisioned by the final priority have been completed successfully. The new RRTC will generate, and promote the use of, new knowledge that will improve the options for individuals with disabilities to perform regular activities of their choice in the community.

Accessible Format: Individuals with disabilities can obtain this document in an accessible format (e.g., braille, large print, audiotape, or compact disc) on request to the program contact person listed under FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.



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Dated: May 15, 2013

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Michael K. Yudin,  
Delegated the authority  
to perform the functions  
and the duties of the Assistant  
Secretary for Special  
Education and  
Rehabilitative Services.

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